

To: Fritz, Matthew[Fritz.Matthew@epa.gov]
From: Enck, Judith
Sent: Mon 7/18/2016 2:11:26 PM
Subject: FW: News Clips (PFCs)

From: Rodriguez, Elias **On Behalf Of** Region2 PAD News
Sent: Monday, July 18, 2016 8:38 AM
To: R2 EPA Region 2 (EPA Staff) <R2_EPA_Region_2_EPA_Staff@epa.gov>
Subject: News Clips (PFCs)

Fox & Friends: New Yorkers want answers from Gov. Cuomo about unsafe water

Video: Jul. 14, 2016 - 3:31 - Governor's administration accused of knowing about contamination for more than a year; Details on 'Fox & Friends'

LINK: http://video.foxnews.com/v/5035275807001/new-yorkers-want-answers-from-gov-cuomo-about-unsafe-water/?playlist_id=930909787001#sp=show-clips

The Post Star

EDITORIAL: Will politics as usual get Hoosick Falls any help?

Jul 17, 2016

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand's appearance in Hoosick Falls last week could very well be the turning point for the small town in Rensselaer County to get the help it needs.

It has been two years since it was discovered that the Hoosick Falls water supply had been contaminated with perfluorooctanoic acid, a chemical used in non-stick coatings, by the Saint-Gobain and Honeywell companies.

Residents made it clear in the town hall meeting hosted by Gillibrand that they remain frustrated about the state's response and lack of concern about their health.

Sen. Gillibrand, wiping away tears at times, said she would like the state to pass new legislation that would allow residents affected by the contamination to receive monitoring in the long term, much in the way Ground Zero first-responders were monitored after the 9/11 terror attacks in New York City.

At first glance, it seems like a good idea, but detailed studies of how much the contamination has impacted residents' health could take decades. The long-term health effects of PFOA have not been studied to anywhere near the extent of something like lead.

In addition, the comparison to first responders at Ground Zero doesn't work. First responders experienced a far more intense initial exposure and the effects surfaced soon afterward.

Regardless, the visit by a sitting U.S. senator got Hoosick Falls residents' attention and action from their state Legislature.

It was clear at the town hall meeting that many Hoosick Falls residents are at the end of their ropes with the foot-dragging at the state level.

The response has been so bungled that a congressional oversight committee rode to the rescue this past week and demanded documents from the Cuomo administration related to the water contamination.

You know you are in trouble when Congress is the cavalry.

Rep. Jason Chaffetz of Utah, who chairs the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, questioned why the state had told residents that their water was safe.

It is an excellent and overdue question that residents deserve to have answered.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo has defended the actions of his administration on one hand, while wondering why the EPA has not done more. Congress is asking that question, too.

What we fear now is that every politician facing re-election in November — that would be the entire state Legislature — is now screaming to get answers for Hoosick Falls while making themselves look good.

Until the federal government got involved, the New York State Legislature didn't want to do anything.

While Hoosick Falls residents have been able to count on Assemblyman Steve McLaughlin to fight for hearings in the Assembly, their representative in the Senate — Sen. Kathy Marchione — has been asking for a task force instead. But nothing came of that either.

When your own elected representative shows little inclination to get to the bottom of a serious health crisis in her own district, you know you are in trouble.

To say Sen. Marchione has been indecisive would be kind. In June, she proposed legislation that would allow people harmed by contamination to bring a lawsuit against the polluters. But a day later, she amended the legislation, essentially gutting the bill.

Hoosick Falls residents called her a "Benedict Arnold" on social media and environmentalist/actor Mark Ruffalo tweeted her actions were "disgusting."

Marchione didn't stick to her guns long, doing another about-face the next day and saying the original bill was her top priority.

With the outcry mounting at the federal level, our state political leaders did what they do best — they tried to save face.

Days before Gillibrand's appearance, the state Assembly overcame its initial reluctance to hold hearings on the crisis in Hoosick Falls and moved forward.

Two days later, just minutes after Sen. Gillibrand's town hall meeting ended, the state Senate announced it would hold hearings as well.

Better late than never.

What Hoosick Falls residents should especially fear is that the politicization of the water contamination issue will lead to lots of empty promises right up until the day after the election.

The question we're asking, and we suspect the people of Hoosick Falls are asking, is not what took them so long, but whether any of this will get them the help they need.

AP Photo:

State Assemblyman Steve McLaughlin, R-Troy, standing next to photos of children from Hoosick Falls, prepares to speak during a news conference June 15 at the state Capitol in Albany calling for hearings on the state's handling of drinking water contamination in Hoosick Falls. While politicians go back and forth, the village is not receiving the help it needs.

Local editorials represent the opinion of The Post-Star editorial board, which consists of Publisher Terry Coomes, Controller/Operations Director Brian Corcoran, Editor Ken Tingley, Projects Editor Will Doolittle and citizen representative Tom Portuese.

Times Union

Restore Superfund tax

By TU Editorial Board

July 18, 2016

When a community suddenly discovers its drinking water is tainted or its soil is dangerously contaminated, people expect government to step in and get the mess cleaned up, either by holding the polluter accountable or using emergency funds to do it.

Yet government's ability to do this fundamental duty — which, ultimately, is to protect public health — has diminished in recent decades. It's the result of fiscal priorities guided by oversimplified anti-tax ideology and the demonization of the same "big government" we expect to solve such problems.

As reporting by the Times Union's Brendan J. Lyons found, the number of cleanups under the

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund program has been falling steadily, from 85 completed in 1999 to just 14 in 2013. It's no coincidence; funding for the EPA plunged from \$2 billion to \$1.1 billion in that time period.

It's not for want of sites to clean up. There are more than 1,300 Superfund sites across the country. This industrial legacy is particularly acute in the New York-New Jersey area, which has more people living within three miles of a Superfund site – 10 million – than any other EPA region.

There was once enough money for this essential program. It came from a tax on petroleum and chemical companies. But that tax expired in 1995 and was never renewed. Even as taxpayers subsidize the fossil fuel industry through tax breaks to the tune of \$4.8 billion a year, tax hawks in Congress refuse to ask industry to devote a modest share of its revenue to cleaning up pollution.

The EPA in particular has also become a standard scapegoat for Republicans and conservative opinion makers, who blame it for the disappearance of manufacturing jobs. Perhaps they forget the putrid air and dirty rivers that preceded the environmental movement. Seemingly, they also fail to recognize that pollution is nonpartisan. It plagues Democrat-dominated urban areas and Republican bastions like rural Rensselaer County alike.

Perhaps they take it for granted that the EPA will simply do its job, no matter how underfunded it is. It can't, of course. The EPA and Superfund need adequate funding.

It is hard to imagine any reasonable person of any political persuasion disagreeing with the idea that polluters should be held responsible for the pollution they cause. Yes, there are good players and bad ones. Sometimes substances aren't found to be toxic until years after they're legally dumped. Sometimes a company buys a property and unexpectedly inherits a problem. Or pollution is found long after a company goes out of business.

All the more reasons why industry as a whole should contribute on an ongoing basis to adequately support Superfund, and why Congress should bring back a modest "polluter pays" tax. Consider it one of the costs of good governance, good corporate citizenship, and good public health.

Times Union

Letter: Town still needs answers to PFOA

To the editor

Published 3:42 pm, Saturday, July 16, 2016

I worked at Taconic for 28 years and lived for 17 years in a house with a well found to be contaminated with PFOA. I had my blood tested and my "number" is 759.

In the coming weeks, there will be state and federal hearings about the government's slow response to the PFOA crisis. We deserve to know why there was no action until a Times Union

article in December 2015.

What action did the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency take in 2004 after its successful suit against DuPont for covering up the dangers of PFOA? Did the EPA research what areas other than West Virginia and Ohio may have PFOA contamination? Why did the EPA not issue a health alert or contact state agencies about the dangers uncovered?

Taconic had its wells tested for PFOA contamination in 2004. When the results came in, the well water was disconnected from the cafeteria coffeemakers and we were told not to drink the tap water. If a manufacturing company knew of the dangers, why didn't the state Department of Environmental Conservation and Department of Health?

All man-made chemicals should be tested for safety before they are allowed to migrate into our environment and drinking water. Medical monitoring should be provided to those with contaminated blood to identify health problems before they become deadly.

When the news coverage of PFOA contamination fades, there will still be hundreds of people living this nightmare. We need answers, and we will need help in the future.

Suzanne Seymour

Averill Park

Photo: Lori Van Buren

Exterior of the plastics company Taconic on Friday, Feb. 26, 2016 in Petersburg, N.Y. (Lori Van Buren / Times Union)

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